REMARKS OF CONGRESSMAN HENRY A. WAXMAN
NORD AWARD DINNER
February 23, 1993

I am flattered to receive this award. The Orphan Drug Act is one of the laws that I am most proud of. I first learned about orphan drugs from a constituent who had an orphan disease, which could be treated. But the treatment was not available in this country because no company was interested in obtaining approval from the FDA.

The Orphan Drug Act uses free market mechanisms to change behavior. We offered companies grants, tax credits, and exclusivity with the hope that this would be enough to interest them in marketing treatments that had already been discovered and in undertaking research on new potential cures.

And we succeeded. Ten years later, hundreds of orphan drugs are being tested; almost 90 have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

While I am happy to receive this award, the real credit for the success of the Orphan Drug Act goes to the people in this room.

* People like Abbey Meyers who volunteered her time and so effectively used the political process to get the bill enacted <u>and</u> signed;

* Jack Klugman, who heard about the issue after our first hearing, made it a national issue on the television show Quincy, and then came to Capitol Hill to testify because he cared;

*   Bill Corr, who as counsel to my Subcommittee, did virtually all the staff work essential to enactment of the bill;

*   And of course Senator Nancy Kassebaum who so successfully steered the bill through the Senate.

Finally, the credit for the success of the Orphan Drug Act goes to the drug companies, many of whom are represented in this room, who have used the Act to make making numerous treatments available to people with rare and severely debilitating diseases.

As we all know, there are still a few kinks in the Orphan Drug Act, but I am confident that we will work them out.

I can assure you that I will treasure this award and all that it stands for. I feel fortunate to have been able to contribute to this effort. Thank you.